

CAL VET

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

VETERANS NEWS

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Press Release From the Office of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger Followed by a Statement from California Veterans Affairs Secretary Tom Johnson



Office of the Governor

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
THE PEOPLE'S GOVERNOR

PRESS RELEASE

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Governor Announces that Thousands of Additional Veterans are Now Eligible to Apply for Cal-Vet Low Interest Home Loans

Legislation Backed By Schwarzenegger Administration Signed Into Law Today In Washington

Today the Heroes Earnings Assistance and Relief Tax Act of 2008, the "HEART Act," was signed into law by President Bush. Actively pushed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and the California Department of Veterans Affairs, this legislation makes veterans who entered active military duty after December 31, 1976 eligible to apply for Qualified Veterans Mortgage Bonds (QVMB) under the state's longstanding CalVet Home Loan Program.

"All California veterans deserve our gratitude, whenever and wherever they served our country," said Governor Schwarzenegger. "Today is a great day now that more veterans will be eligible for CalVet home loans. We have been working toward this goal for a long time and now more veterans will have access to the low-interest home loans that veterans from World War I to the Vietnam War have enjoyed."

Governor Schwarzenegger personally encouraged lawmakers in Washington D.C. to support the HEART Act, which changes Internal Revenue Code to allow these benefits for recent wartime veterans. Until this legislation was signed, the Internal Revenue Code limited QVMB loans to veterans who served on active duty prior to January 1, 1977. This made veterans of the Vietnam War the last wartime veterans eligible for this benefit. Supporters of the HEART Act have long contended that veterans from deployments to Panama, the Persian Gulf, Operation Desert Storm, Somalia, the Balkans, and now in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan should have access to the same benefit earlier veterans received.

Since 1922, California has operated, at no expense to its General Fund, the voter-approved Cal-Vet Home Loan Program, a QVMB program that has helped more than 419,000 California wartime veterans become homeowners. The Tax Reform Act of 1984 limited the use of QVMBs to wartime veterans with active military duty prior to 1977. The vast majority of California veterans from recent conflicts were not eligible before the HEART Act was signed. QVMB home loan programs are also available in Alaska, Oregon, Texas, and Wisconsin.

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Statement From California Veterans Affairs Secretary Tom Johnson

"This is great news. I want to thank the Governor, his Washington DC office staff, Congresswoman Susan Davis, Congressman Wally Herger, and each and every veterans service organization member who worked long and hard for the passage of this bill. We could not have reached our goal without their unwavering support.

All veterans who serve our country during a time of war should be given the same respect regardless of the period of time their service was provided. This new law was a long time coming, but it goes a long way toward restoring that respect."

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Note to editors: This Veterans News and previous CDVA news releases, advisories, and newsletters are available on our website at www.cdva.ca.gov and via email from Jaime.Arteaga@cdva.ca.gov.